SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: The Minister has given a completely distorted picture so far as the number is concerned. The Minister has said that in Assam 74 deaths have occurred, but as far as I know, in Lakhimpur and Golaghat districts alone more than 200 children died of this disease last year. It is a killer disease and it has left thousands of children completely invalid. Instead of giving some casual and inadequate answer the Minister should give a pointed reply regarding this disease. From the papers we come to know that Japan and some other Eastern countries have completely arrested this disease. I want to know why positive steps have not been taken in our country to arrest this disease.

SHRI MOTI LAL VORA: In Assam only 49 persons have died this year. I do not have any other information To the State of Assam we have supplied vaccine worth Rs. 12,20,000 free of cost. Recently I met the Minister of Health, Assam, when I went there and he said that he was satisfied with the medicines sent to them by the Government of India.

Regarding rehabilitation, generally this is undertaken by the States. About physiotherapy equipment, we have supplied physiotherapy equipment to the State of West Bengal costing about Rs. 2,73,000. This is a very small amount. If the States ask us, we can definitely look into it

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: This JE disease is spreading in all the States in a big way and a number of children are dying. Some of the States are not in a position to cope with the situation. Will the hon. Minister be thinking of convening a conference of all the State Health Ministers and drawing up a massive plan to go into action? Otherwise if it is left to the State Governments alone, I do not think that can solve the problem. He must take initiative to convene a conference of all the Health Ministers mainly the Health Ministers of UP, Bihar, Assam and several other States, especially of Tamil Nadu, so that he can organise a massive campaign and press into service all the Health Departments and undertake a big action plan. Otherwise what is the meaning of saying "we are doing this or that"? This will not solve the problem.

SHRI MOTI LAL VORA: I am really thankful to the hon. Member for the suggestion. We will definitely call a conference of Health Ministers of these nine States so that we discuss at length about this disease, how to eradicate this disease and what measures are to be taken after that conference. We will soon convene a conference of Health Ministers of all these nine States.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 65.

Changes in the Electoral system

*65. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI:†

SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whethe rGovernment propose to introduce any changes in the electrol system in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) by when the necessary legislation is proposed to be brought forward?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) Various proposals to bring about electoral reforms are under active consideration of the Government and they are likely to be finalised early.

SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Sir, the need for electoral reforms has been a major issue of political debate in the country. A number of deficiencies noticed in the conduct of elections have been

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Sudha Vijay Joshi.

highlighted. There have been different formulations on the issue framed by various political parties. Some proposals have been examined by the Election Commission and also by the Government of India. Besides the Government is very keen to introduce the legislation.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal before the Government to reserve seats for women in State Assemblies and also in the Lok Sabha. If constituencies are reserved for women, the seats will be utilized by them. If just a percentage is fixed, then the reserved percentage may not be fulfilled. If the requisite percentage is not there in the Assemblies and Lok Sabha, is there any alternative proposal for co-option of women?

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: So far as reservation is concerned, there is no provision for that. But I would like to state the position of our party. We give due representation to women in our party when we allot the tickets.

SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: You must see that women members should be there, that so much percentage will be given to women and so many members will be there in the State Assemblies and Lok Sabha.

My second supplementary is, I would like to know whether Government is considering any proposal to lower the age for voting to 18 for the General Elections. What are the definite steps that Government propose to introduce to keep religion away from electoral process and politics? Is there any proposal before the Government to put a ceiling on total expenses that the candidate and his party can incur in the election?

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: I would like to make it clear at the outset that our party has been always looking for passing on the responsibility to the younger generation and in that process several resolutions were passed in the Congress Party and the Youth Congress. Our party has recently discussed this proposal... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: He is a Government Minister and this is Parliament. He should speak about Government programme and not of his party.

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: I am replying to the question.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Sir, I am on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order in Question Hour.

SHRI M. A. BABY: Sir, please remove that statement from the record... (*Interruptions*)... Sir, please give a ruling on this request.... (*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI): Why should it be removed? It is a good thing ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI M. A. BABY: Don't convert this House into an AICC session. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: We know, it is a party going out ... (*Interruptions*)...

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): Sir, my colleague is perfectly within his rights when he says about the attitude of the party about th reduction of age. Last time when this question was raised ..(*Interruptions*)...

PROF. C LAKSHMANNA: We want to know what is the attitude of the Government... (*Interruptions*)..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, please.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, you may recollect that last time, when the Prime Minister intervened in this question various Members from the Opposition said "Our party suggested these things." We have heard this. The Opposition leaders themselves spoke on behalf of their parties in this very House.. (*Interruptions*). What is, wrong if my colleague says this?

But let us not forget what happened in this House . (*Interruptions*)..

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: She is asking about the age of 18 and he is talking about Bofors!...(*Interruptions*)..

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: She did not address the question to the party, she addressed the question to the Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You know very well that in India, in our Constitution, we have adopted the party system of Government ..(*Interruptions*)... Why waste time on unnecessary things? Let us proceed and not waste time. Please do not waste time on unnecessary things. It is everybody's time not my time alone.

SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: Your kind attention, Sir (*Interruptions*) .

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Sir, we do appreciate that they have completely obliterated the difference between the party and the Government .. (*Interruptions*).. ..

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, I should now say, here, that I must thank the honourable lady Member who has made this suggestion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What did she suggest?

SHRI B SHANKARANAND: Reduction of age. (*Interruptions*)..

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Yes or no?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the reduction? Is it only for ladies?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: That is the style of functioning of his party, Sir. I should say that there are various suggestions before the Government. The Government will look into these suggestions and, as the Prime Minister has already said, we will come before the house after consulting the Opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you considering the reduction of age for ladies, especially?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, you are aware that under the Constitution there is no reservation except for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for seats. But it is true that more than 50 per cent of the population in this country are women, and we have to consider about women and, as a party—as my colleague has said—the Prime Minister has given, for the first time, major seats to women as far as the Lok Sabha is concerned.

श्री सरेन्द्र सिंह डाकुर . माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं अपनी पार्टी की सरकार और सरकार के प्रधान मंत्री आदरणीय राजीव गांधी जी का धन्यवाद करूंगा कि उन्होंने युवा कांग्रेस और एन० एस०यू०आई० की इस मांग को स्वीकार किया है कि वोटिंग एज 18 साल की जाये । मैं उनका और पार्टी की सरकार का बहुत हार्दिक धन्यवाद करूंगा कि उन्होंने इस देश के युवकों की आवाज को समझा और उसको मान्य किया । मैं इसी के साथ एक प्रश्न और करना चाहूंगा... (**व्यवधान**) । हमारी विरोधी पार्टियों को इस बात में तकलीफ होती है । वे हर बात के लिए श्रेय नहीं ले सकते हैं । जो बात हमारी पार्टी ने ओरिजिनेट की है उसका श्रेय तो हमारी पार्टी को ही जाना चाहिए । मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से यह प्रश्न करना चाहता हूं कि जब रिजर्वेशन की मांग की जाती है तो उसमें महिलाएं भी आती हैं क्योंकि देश की आधी से अधिक आबादी महिलाओं की है और युवकों की संख्या कुल जनसंख्या का 60 प्रतिशत से भी अधिक है, इसलिए जब वोटिंग एज की बात चल रही है तो क्या आप चुनावों में इनकी संख्या बढ़ाने और इनको अधिक सीटें देने पर विचार कर रहे हैं ।

श्री हंसराज भारद्वाज : श्रीमन्, आगे आने वाला सारा वक्त युवकों का है । जहां तक रिजर्वेशन का सवाल है, रिजर्वेशन कांस्टिट्यूशन के तहत नहीं है । लेकिन मैं आपकी इजाजत से कहना चाहता हूं कि मुझे अपनी पार्टी के बारे में कहने की

पूरी अथोरिटी है। हमारी पार्टी की पूरी कमिटमेंट युवकों के साथ है और युवा शक्ति के सम्राट पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू के सेन्टेनरी वर्ष में हम युवकों को और भी मजबूत करेंगे।

श्री सभापति : आपने स्त्री शक्ति को छोड़ दिया। क्या स्त्रियों के लिए कोई कमिटमेंट नहीं है?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: He is very partial to ladies.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: We have a lot of women representatives as compared to that side, Sir.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Sir, the Government has made repeated statements in this House and also outside that it would bring reforms in the electoral system. The Prime Minister also is on record that in this session itself the relevant Bill would be introduced. But the Minister's answer does not indicate the time schedule. Would he assure that the Bill would be introduced in this session and that the next elections would take place only after the reforms have been carried out?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, this question has been answered by the Prime Minister himself last time. It is a very complicated issue. It deserves consultation with the Opposition people. The Opposition leaders have also asked the Government that they should be consulted. We have promised that the Opposition would be consulted on this matter. We will come before the House after the consultation.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): May I just add a little bit to that. We have a very serious problem in consulting the Opposition because we do not know who is in which party at the moment.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Sir, there are recognised parties in this House. On what basis has he been calling the Opposition (*Interruptions*). It is not a pun or fun. On what basis has the Prime Minister been calling the Opposition earlier? On the same basis he can call the Opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says, "Call on the same basis."

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI: We are not very sure because there is this thing called "National Front". When some people seem to have veto powers over the National Front, perhaps if we could just call one person who represents all those parties.. (*Interruptions*). .. ..

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: We did not expect such an answer from the Prime Minister.

SHRI DEBA PRASAD RAY: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether..

DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Has the Government recognised the National Front as one Opposition party? I want to know this.

SHRI DEBA PRASAD RAY: I have been called to put a supplementary. I want to put a supplementary. I want to know from the hon Minister if there is any proposal before the Government to provide the Election Commission with a separate infra-structure so as to ensure that the Election Commission is able to conduct elections without being dependent on the concerned State Government machinery.

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: Sir, we have the experience of Haryana. We found that the booths were captured by the State machinery, police and administration. We have a serious problem to see that democracy survives in this country

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, he has to explain what his experience about Haryana is. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: Kindly bear with me for one minute... (*Interruptions*). This is a very serious

problem and if they are sincere about the election reforms, this is the first thing they must do that no State Government should be allowed the use of official machinery for their political ends. And they are really....

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: But how are you misusing ... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: They are paying only lip-sympathy to democracy. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: How are you misusing the official machinery and aircraft and helicopters? ..... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: Sir, this is the verdict of the Election Commission. A total of 146 booths in one constituency were rigged and we are really concerned that it is not repeated. . (*Interruptions*).

DR BAPU KALDATE: Have you read the Election Commission's report about Bihar? Why are you talking of Haryana only? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: Whether it is Bihar or Haryana . . .

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Fifty crores of rupees were spent on Prime Minister's visit to Tamil Nadu for elections. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: I have a duty to this House to tell you that we will not permit this type of booth capturing in future. We have to take adequate measures and we will see that this type of murder of democracy is not allowed in any State whether it is in Bihar or in Haryana or anywhere else. (*Interruption*)

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : माननीय सभापति जी, 1985 में आश्वासन दिया गया था कि चुनाव कानूनों में व्यापक परिवर्तन किया जायेगा। इसके बाद चुनाव आयोग ने इस बारे में समस्त राजनैतिक दलों से सुझाव मांगे थे। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि यह जो जुलाई 85 में सुझाव मांगे गये थे, तो वह पार्टी, जिस पार्टी के अध्यक्ष इस देश के प्रधान मंत्री श्री राजीव गांधी हैं, उस पार्टी ने चुनाव आयोग को आज तक, अपने सुझाव चुनाव कानूनों में संशोधन करने के लिए भेजे हैं या नहीं भेजे है ?

श्री हंसराज भारद्वाज : श्रीमन्, मैं बहुत अदब के साथ कहना चाहता हूं और मैं समझता हूं, हमारे विपक्ष के भाई सुन, पहला प्रपोजल इलेक्शन कमीशन का था एन्टी डिफेक्शन ला पास करने का। उसको प्रधान मंत्री जी ने, प्रधान मंत्री बनते ही पास कर दिया और आज ये लोग हमारी पार्टी के डिफेक्टर को अपना लीडर बना रहे हैं। जहां तक उनकी बुद्धि की हम ठीक कर सकते है . . . (**व्यवधान**) . . .

श्री बी० सत्यनारायण रेड्डी : जो प्रश्न है उसका जवाब नहीं आया है।

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : मेरा प्रश्न यह था कि चुनाव आयोग ने सभी राजनैतिक दलों से चुनाव कानूनों में परिवर्तन हेतु सुझाव मांगे थे तो उस पार्टी ने, जिस पार्टी के अध्यक्ष श्री राजीव गांधी हैं तो क्या श्री राजीव गांधी ने अपनी पार्टी की ओर से चुनाव आयोग को चुनाव कानूनों में परिवर्तन करने के लिए सुझाव भेजे हैं या नहीं भेजे है ?

श्री हंसराज भारद्वाज : श्रीमन्, चुनाव आयोग के प्रोपोजल गवर्नमेंट के पास आते है और तब उन पर निर्णय होता है और उसको हम सदन द्वारा पास कराते है। . . . (**व्यवधान**) . . . उसके बाद जब कानून पास हो जाता है, मैं यह भी बड़े अदब के साथ कहना चाहता हूं कि यूनेनीमस्ली, जब विरोधियों के साथ यूनेनीमस वोट होता है, उसको भी जाकर ये बाद में खराब करते हैं। तो मैं समझता हूं कि मुल्क में अगर ये डेमोक्रेसी के बारे में बात करते हैं, सुधार के बारे में बात करते हैं, तो उसमें पहले अपने हृदय को साफ करें और दिशा देखें और फिर हमको सुझाव दें।

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : 85, 86, 87 और अब 88, कांग्रेस पार्टी ने अभी तक कोई भी सुझाव चुनाव आयोग को नहीं दिया जब कि चुनाव आयोग ने उनको बार बार रिमाइंडर भेजे है।.. (व्यवधान)

श्री हंसराज भारद्वाज : पूरी कांग्रेस पार्टी के अंदर, इकाई से लेकर कांग्रेस वर्किंग कमेटी तक, इस पर डिसकशन हुआ है जब कि देश की दूसरी पार्टियां देश का खंडन करने में लगी हुई हैं। उनका और कोई काम नहीं है।

SHRI SUBRAMAINAN SWAMY: Sir, on the pretext of...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are not asking the question.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I have given my name.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. But I have called Mr. C. P. Thakur. Your turn will come.

PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR: Within the proposed electoral changes (*Interruptions*)... there is a need to have a second look at the composition of the Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies in view of the fact that the population in the voting category has increased and there has been a shift in population across regions and district constituencies. In that context will the hon. Minister kindly consider the possibility of creating a delimitation commission all over again to see that something is corrected to give it a more representational character.

SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ: The proposal was received...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Linking of Ganga with Cauvery

*61. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state the current view of Government on the issue of linking Ganga and Cauvery rivers and what are the details of the scheme now pending with Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): Proposals for linking Ganga and Cauvery rivers for transfer of surplus waters to deficit areas have been considered in the past. On examination, it was found that the proposal was not practicable and financially prohibitive. Within a national perspective, the feasibility study on Peninsular Rivers development has been undertaken by the National Water Development Agency.

Cause of floods in Punjab

@*63. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since ascertained the exact cause of floods in Punjab during September, 1988;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what further efforts Government propose to take to avoid the recurrence of such floods in that state?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) Recent floods were caused due to unprecedented heavy and widespread rainfall during a short period from 23 to 26 September, 1988 in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.

(c) To manage with floods of such unprecedented nature, i.e., a probability of about once in thousand years, the cost effective measures include timely flood warnings, proper regulation of flood plains, in addition to structural measures.

@Previously Starred Question 43, transferred from the 4th November, 1988.